

Subject Environmental permits

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Summary

Section 1 of House File 3057 requires the Pollution Control Agency (PCA) to hold a public meeting every five years on individual state air quality permits issued by the agency that do not expire, so that the public may comment and ask questions regarding the permit, the facility's operations, testing results, compliance, and other issues. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, this provision would apply to about 125 facilities.

Air quality permits issued by the PCA to facilities whose potential air emissions exceed federal thresholds are known as "federal" permits. The agency is required by federal law to reissue these permits every five years, at which time there is a 30-day public comment period, during which time a person may request a public meeting, a request which, under agency rules, the PCA commissioner must grant.

"State individual" permits are issued to facilities that accept certain operational conditions that reduce their potential emissions below federal thresholds. State permits are also issued to facilities whose potential emissions fall below federal thresholds but above state standards, where the latter are more restrictive than federal standards. In Minnesota, this means facilities that emit sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in diameter.

Section 2 of the bill requires the commissioner to provide a written account of the commissioner's reasons for denying a request to review a permit's provisions.